

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 L-01 H-01 INR-05 PM-03 PA-01
SP-02 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 ICA-01 MCE-00
ACDA-10 HA-02 /056 W
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R 162245Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9141
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 5755

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PMAS, EC
SUBJECT: PERU ACCUSED OF TRYING TO DRIVE WEDGE BETWEEN US
AND ECUADOR

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. ACTING FOREIGN UNDERSECRETARY CAUTIONED
AMBASSADOR ON AUGUST 15 THAT PERU'S RECENT COMPLAINTS ABOUT
PROPOSED VULCAN/CHAPARRAL TRANSFER WERE DESIGNED TO DISRUPT
PRESENT SMOOTH STATE OF US-ECUADOREAN COOPERATION. VEINTIMILLA
CLAIMED THAT THIS WAS TRADITIONAL PERUVIAN FOREIGN POLICY MOVE.
END SUMMARY.

2. ACTING FOREIGN UNDERSECRETARY HERNAN VEINTIMILLA ASKED TO
SPEAK TO AMBASSADOR ALONE AFTER CEREMONY AT FOREIGN MINISTRY
ON AUGUST 15 IN ORDER TO DISCUSS LATEST PERUVIAN FOREIGN POLICY
MOVES.

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3. VEINTIMILLA SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN ASKED BY THE SUPREME
COUNCIL TO CONVEY TO AMBASSADOR ECUADOR'S CONCERNS ABOUT WHAT
IT PERCEIVED TO BE A PERUVIAN CAMPAIGN DESIGNED TO DRIVE
A WEDGE BETWEEN THE US AND ECUADOR. HE SAID THAT THE
NEWS STORY AND EDITORIAL IN EL COMERCIO OF LIMA LATE LAST
MONTH WHICH LAMENTED THE REPORT OF IMMINENT PURCHASE BY
ECUADOR OF THE VULCAN/CHAPARRAL SURFACE-AIR SYSTEM AND

SUGGESTED THAT NEITHER ECUADOR NOR THE US WAS SINCERE IN ITS ATTEMPT TO PREVENT A REGIONAL ARMS RACE WAS A PART OF THIS CAMPAIGN. THE ECUADOREAN AMBASSADOR IN LIMA HAD ALSO BEEN SUMMONED TO THE PERU FOREIGN MINISTRY TO RECEIVE AN OFFICIAL COMPLAINT ALONG THE SAME LINES. VEINTIMILLA RELATED THAT AMBASSADOR VASCO IN LIMA HAD REPLIED THAT PERU'S EXPRESSION OF CONCERN ON THE V/C PURCHASE CAUSED ECUADOR TO WORRY SINCE THE REASONS FOR THE PURCHASE OF SUCH A PURELY DEFENSIVE SYSTEM WERE OBVIOUS. VEINTIMILLA SAID, HOWEVER, THAT ECUADOR WAS MORE DISQUIETED ABOUT INFORMATION THAT IT HAD HEARD REGARDING SIMILAR PERUVIAN COMPLAINTS TO THE US.

4. VEINTIMILLA AIRILY DISMISSED THE PERUVIAN CONTENTION THAT THE US AND ECUADOR WERE CONTRIBUTING TO AN ARMS RACE BY ITS NEGOTIATIONS ON THE V/C. HE SAID THAT THE US WAS WELL ENOUGH AWARE OF PERU'S ARMS ACQUISITIONS IN RECENT YEARS AS WELL AS THE PURPOSE OF THE V/C AS A COUNTERMEASURE. HE PERCEIVED IN THE RECENT PERUVIAN COMPLAINTS A REFLECTION OF WHAT HAS BEEN TRADITIONAL PERU FOREIGN POLICY SINCE 1939 OF ATTEMPTING TO KEEP ECUADOR SEPARATED FROM THE US. VEINTIMILLA REMARKED THAT DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS ECUADOR AND THE US HAVE GROWN CLOSE AND THAT THIS HAS BEEN UPSETTING TO PERU'S POLITICO-MILITARY STRATEGY. AS A RESULT, PERU HAS EMBARKED UPON A CAMPAIGN TO SULLY ECUADOR'S IMAGE IN WASHINGTON AND, CONFIDENTIAL

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UTILIZING THE GOOD INTENTIONS OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TOWARD ARMS SALES, SHAME OR SCARE THE US AWAY FROM ECUADOR.

5. AMBASSADOR ASSURED VEINTIMILLA THAT US HAD CAREFULLY EXAMINED V/C SALE OFFER TO ECUADOR AND HAVING CONSIDERED MANY FACTORS, INCLUDING THE POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION TO AN ARMS RACE, HAD CONCLUDED THAT THE TRANSFER SERVED OUR MUTUAL INTERESTS. WE WERE UNLIKELY TO BE DISSUADED FROM THIS COURSE AT THIS DATE AS A RESULT OF PERUVIAN PROTESTS. HE SAID THAT PERU HAD BEEN INFORMED OF THIS POSITION. VEINTIMILLA THANKED THE AMBASSADOR FOR HIS REASSURANCE AND ASKED THAT GOE CONCERN BE CONVEYED TO WASHINGTON.

6. COMMENT: THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS BEEN A LATE, BUT ENTHUSIASTIC, SUPPORTER OF THE PROPOSED SALE OF THE V/C TO ECUADOR. ITS INTEREST STEMS FROM ITS PERCEPTION THAT THE V/C SYSTEM, NO MATTER ITS TACTICAL VALUE, IS STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT TO ECUADOR AS A SYMBOL OF US-ECUADOREAN SECURITY COOPERATION. THIS SYMBOL, BELIEVES THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, WILL FORCE PERU TO CONSIDER MORE CAREFULLY ANY BELLICOSE DESIGNS THAT IT MIGHT HARBOR TOWARD ECUADOR. CONVERSELY, THE DENIAL TO ECUADOR OF DEFENSE MATERIAL BY THE US WOULD BE SEEN BY THE FOREIGN

MINISTRY AS SENDING THE WRONG SIGNALS TO PERU AND THEREFORE
ENCOURAGING PERU'S MORE UNWHOLESOME INTENTIONS.

7. VEINTIMILLA'S CITATION OF PERU'S TRADITIONAL FOREIGN
POLICY SINCE 1939 IS VALIDATED IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT-
COMMISSIONED BRYCE WOOD STUDY ON THE 1941 PERU-ECUADOR
CONFLICT. APPARENTLY, WHEN THE US BECAME AN ACTIVE
MEDIATOR DURING THE LAST FEW MONTHS PRIOR TO THE WAR,
THE PERU FOREIGN MINISTRY EMPLOYED THE PAGES OF EL COMERCIO
TO SINGLE OUT THE US AMONG THE SEVERAL MEDIATORS FOR
CRITICISM AND CENSURE THE PROPOSED TRANSFER OF SOME COAST
GUARD VESSELS TO ECUADOR AS EVIDENCE OF US COLLUSION WITH
ECUADOR AGAINST PERU. PERU FOREIGN MINISTRY SIMULTANEOUSLY
CONDUCTED A SERIES OF HIGH-PITCHED DEMARCHES ALONG THE
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SAME LINE. THE US REACTED BY BEATING A RETREAT, WHICH,
ACCORDING TO WOOD, PROBABLY ENCOURAGED PERU TO INVADE
ECUADOR IN JULY.
GONZALEZ

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